

**Rotary**  
Club of  
Charlotte



# THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

February 1, 2022

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## Bob Schurmeier: An update from the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation

By Kimberly McMillan

Bob Schurmeier grew up in Charlotte and spent more than 10 years as deputy chief of what became the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. He also served briefly as interim chief and, after retirement in 2004, he founded US ISS, an investigative and security consulting business.

In 2016, the NC General Assembly unanimously confirmed Schurmeier as the 14<sup>th</sup> director of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (NCSBI), the state agency that conducts criminal investigations in area that include narcotics, arson, public corruption, election laws, misuse of state property, environmental crimes, human trafficking, child sexual abuse in daycare centers and assaults and threats made against police officers.

Established in 1937, the SBI's mission is "to secure a more effective administration of the criminal laws of the state by investigating crimes, identifying and apprehending criminals and preparing evidence for use in criminal courts."

“The SBI is one of the most vital law enforcement agencies in North Carolina that you have never heard of,” said Schurmeier.

The SBI assists police departments and sheriff’s departments in the areas of criminal investigation and fingerprint detection. Currently, there are 262 sworn agents in eight geographical districts across North Carolina with 179 non-sworn assigned to information technology, business office/logistics, human resources, legal counsel, records, criminal information and identification and intelligence. An additional eight sworn positions will be added in April to work in Human Trafficking.

Out of more than 20 NCSBI investigations and specialized programs mentioned during his presentation, Schurmeier highlighted how North Carolina is under siege by the flow of narcotics and the SBI is making it very clear to cartels they’re going to meet our agents and that their K9 unit is comprised of two dozen dogs specially trained with one that is specially trained to pick up electronic devices as small as a thumb drive.

In terms of the number of violent crimes reported in NC there was a 24% reduction in violent crime reports between 2008 and 2014, however the number of reports increased 15% between 2014 and 2019. While the number of violent crime reports has increased since 2014, the violent crime rate has remained steady since 2019 due to increases in the state’s population. When adjusting for population growth, the decrease in property crime is even more pronounced. The property rate per 100,000 population has seen a 37.86% decrease since 2011. When reviewing arson, property crime, and violent crime reports together, North Carolina has experienced a 35.5% reduction in crime reports submitted since 2008. Additionally, the state has seen a 45.3% decrease in combined arson, property, and violent crime rates since 2008.

The number of murders in North Carolina from 2011 to 2020 has been driven mainly by metropolitan areas, however statewide numbers are lower compared to other parts of the country and cities such as Philadelphia.

The SBI, per North Carolina statute, is the principal investigating agency for all officer involved shootings that involved fatality or serious injuries. As of 2021, there were 27 non-fatal and 32 fatal shootings.

In September 2020, the Cold Case Investigative Team was formed with a focus on partnering with Conference of DA’s, conducting Forensic Genealogy and developing cold case programs with East Carolina University, Campbell University and St. Augustine University who develop leads for SBI cases. Schurmeier shared a few Cold Case Investigative Team success stories including identifying three previous unknown remains through Forensic Genetic Genealogy dating back to 1981, solving a 2016 homicide through DNA and Forensic Genetic Genealogy and the review of cold cases by agents and the resubmitting of DNA evidence solved a 1979 murder of a then three-month old child.

Unfortunately, overdose deaths in North Carolina are on the rise. In 2020, eight North Carolinians died each day from a drug overdose. Since 2000, more than 28,000 North Carolinians lose their lives to drug overdose. In 2021, SBI drug seizures totaled \$48.54 million of which \$36.705 million was the total wholesale value of product seized combined with \$11.834 million in cash/gold.

The SBI along with its partners works to reduce targeted violence in schools, places of worship, workplace and public spaces. The SBI is part of a coalition of local, state and federal law enforcement agents in the fight against terrorism and criminal activity by sharing information. They operate one of 80 fusion centers across the U.S. also known as the North Carolina Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAAC).

SBI was given original jurisdiction to work human trafficking in 2017 without funding. In April, eight full time agents will be assigned to work in the unit. North Carolina ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in 2020 for human trafficking. SBI also works with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to investigate and track cybertips.

\*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/672795023>

The program introduction begins at 28:10 minutes.